

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. An ampholyte polymer comprising:

(a) acrylamidopropyltrimethyl ammonium chloride or methacrylamidopropyltrimethyl ammonium chloride; and b) acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, 2-acrylamido-2-methylpropane sulfonic acid or 2-methacrylamido-2-methylpropane sulfonic acid; wherein the mol ratio of a) : b) ranges from about 20:80 to about 95:5 and wherein the weight average molecular weight of said polymer, as determined by viscometry, is at least about 100,000.

2. The polymer of Claim 1, wherein a) is MAPTAC and b) is acrylic acid.

3. The polymer of Claim 1, wherein said molecular weight ranges from about 100,000 to about 10,000,000.

4. The polymer of Claim 1, wherein the mol ratio of a) : b) ranges from 25:75 to about 75:25.

5. The polymer of Claim 1, which additionally contains up to 20 mol percent of a C<sub>1</sub> - C<sub>22</sub> straight or branched chain alkyl acrylate or alkyl methacrylate.

6. The polymer of Claim 5, wherein said alkyl acrylate is methyl acrylate.

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7. A water soluble ampholyte polymer comprising :

- a) about 20 to about 95 mol % APTAC or MAPTAC;
- b) about 5 to about 80 mol % acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, AMPSA or MAMPSA;
- c) about 0 to about 20 mol % a C<sub>1</sub> - C<sub>22</sub> straight or branched chain

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alkyl acrylate, wherein the molecular weight of said polymer is at least about 100,000.

8. An ampholyte polymer comprising:
- a) about 25 to about 75 mol % APTAC or MAPTAC;
  - b) about 25 to about 75 mol % acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, AMPSA or MAMPSA; and
  - c) about 0.1 to about 20 mol % of a C<sub>1</sub> - C<sub>22</sub> straight or branched chain alkyl acrylate or methacrylate.
9. A method for treating a keratin-containing substrate comprising contacting said substrate with an effective amount of a cosmetically acceptable medium comprising from about 0.1 to about 20% by weight of the ampholyte polymer of Claim 1.
10. A cosmetically acceptable medium containing from about 0.1 to about 20%, based on the weight of said medium, of the polymer of Claim 1.
11. The method of Claim 9 wherein said polymer additionally comprises up to about 20 mol percent of a C<sub>1</sub> - C<sub>22</sub> straight or branched chain alkyl acrylate.
12. The method of Claim 9 wherein said cosmetically acceptable medium is a member selected from the group consisting of a shampoo, an aftershave, a sunscreen, a hand lotion, a liquid soap, a bar soap, a bath oil bar, a shaving cream, a dishwashing liquid, a conditioner, a hair dye, a permanent wave, a hair relaxer, a hair bleach, a hair setting formulation, a styling gel, or a shower gel.
13. A method for treating a keratin-containing substrate comprising contacting said substrate with the ampholyte polymer of Claim 1.

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14.

An ampholyte polymer comprising:

- a) up to about 99 mol % APTAC or MAPTAC; and
- b) acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, AMPSA or MAMPSA, wherein the molecular weight of said polymer is at least about 100,000.

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